

SOCCER FOULS

There are 2 kinds of fouls, Direct Kick Fouls & Indirect Kick Fouls. (Rules are called "Laws of the Game.")

(1) **Direct Kick Fouls** - For which the other team receives a "direct free kick" (meaning a goal can be scored by kicking the ball straight into the goal) or a "penalty kick" ("PK") if the foul occurs within the Penalty Box (Note: It doesn't matter whether the ball was in the Penalty Box or not; what matters is where the foul was committed). There are 10 direct kick fouls. The rules say that the referee should call a foul for numbers 1 thru 6 if he believes they are committed in a manner he considers "careless, reckless or using excessive force":

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent. Accidentally kicking an opponent while tackling the ball is not a foul unless it was careless, reckless, or there was excessive force. If a player slide tackles from the front, it will be considered at least "dangerous play" (which is an indirect kick foul), or kicking, or tripping, or "unsporting behavior", even if the ball is contacted, since it would at the least be reckless or dangerous.
2. tripping or attempting to trip an opponent (if careless, reckless or using excessive force),
3. charging into an opponent (the goalkeeper can also be called for this if his action is careless, reckless or uses excessive force),
4. striking or attempting to strike an opponent (if careless, reckless or using excessive force),
5. pushing an opponent, including the goalkeeper (if careless, reckless or using excessive force),
6. jumping at an opponent in a careless or reckless manner or using excessive force (this includes jumping for a header if an opponent is carelessly or recklessly bumped, and jumping at the goalkeeper),
7. blatant holding or pulling (including holding clothing, using any part of the body to hold an opponent & "Sandwiching"),
8. Making contact with an opponent before touching the ball when tackling an opponent to gain possession of the ball (Note: it is always a foul if the tackler contacts the ballhandler before touching the ball. However, it can still be a direct kick foul if the ball is touched first but the tackler was "careless, reckless, or used excessive force" and was judged to have kicked, tripped, charged or jumped at the ballhandler. Or, if the Referee believes the tackler played in a "dangerous manner", an indirect kick can be awarded),
9. spitting at an opponent, even if it doesn't hit the opponent (this is grounds for a Red Card),
10. Deliberately handling the ball (a "hand ball" should not be called if a player is instinctively trying to protect himself from injury or if the ball hits the hand while it is in a natural position near the player's side and has not been moved toward the ball. This does not apply to the goalkeeper inside his own penalty area.),

(2) **Indirect Kick Fouls** - For which the other team receives an "**indirect free kick**" (meaning a goal only counts if another player touches the ball before it enters the goal). The indirect free kick is taken from where the offense occurred. There are 2 types of indirect kick fouls:

a. **Four that apply to all players:**

1. **"Dangerous Play"** (or playing in a dangerous manner) is any action by a player that in the judgment of the Referee is dangerous to himself or to another player and that isn't a "direct kick foul" such as tripping. Examples would be a high kick when an opponent is nearby, or if a player tries to head a low ball that an opponent is trying to kick, then the player who is putting himself in danger would be guilty of dangerous play. Another example would be any action that might endanger the goalkeeper within the Penalty Box. If the goalkeeper and an opponent both go for a loose ball, the Referee will tend to favor the goalkeeper if there is a collision. It isn't necessary for someone to be hurt for dangerous play to be called. For example, slide tackling with spikes high would be dangerous play, even if the opponent isn't contacted. However, a dangerous act (such as a high kick) isn't "dangerous play" unless an opponent is nearby.
2. **"Impeding the Progress of an Opponent"**. Generally, a player cannot use his body to impede another players movements, even if it is not deliberate. This can be called if a player is not within "playing distance" of the ball (i.e., 3 feet) and block's an opponent's movement or screens an opponent from the ball. However, if a player is within playing distance & able to play the ball (meaning not laying on the ground), the player can legally screen an opponent from the ball. (You usually see this when a ball is going out of bounds & the player whose team will get the throw-in screens the opponent so the opponent can't save the ball). Impeding the progress of an opponent used to be called "obstruction". The rule also applies to "innocently" impeding the goalkeeper by standing in front of him when he has the ball.
3. **Preventing the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands.** A player who attempts to prevent the Goalkeeper from putting the ball into play by standing directly in front of the Goalkeeper can be called for breaking this rule or for "unsporting behavior", in which case both a Yellow Card & an indirect kick would be awarded.
4. **Any time a yellow or red card is shown & a direct kick isn't awarded** (e.g., for "unsporting behavior", "dissent", persistently breaking the rules, and offensive or threatening language; see "Cards" for a list of the many types of unsporting behavior).

b. **Four indirect kick fouls that only apply to the goalkeeper and only if committed inside the Penalty Box** (the goalkeeper is treated like a regular field player when he is outside the Penalty Box -- the Penalty Box includes the line that defines the Box, so if the ball is on the line it is still within the Penalty Box):

1. # Controlling the ball with his hands for more than six (6) seconds before releasing it from his possession (releasing it can include throwing it, kicking it or dropping it to the ground and then kicking or dribbling it. Once released, it is "live"). (Notice that this only applies to the time he actually has possession of the ball, and not to when he might have first touched it by blocking a shot).
2. Touching the ball with hands after it is deliberately kicked to the Goalkeeper by a teammate. (Note: It is okay to pick up an accidentally kicked ball, such as a mis-kick, or a pass from a teammate that isn't "kicked" but is made using the head, chest, knee, etc.).
3. Touching the ball with his hands after he has received it directly on a throw-in from a teammate (i.e., the goalkeeper can't pick up a throw-in from a teammate).
4. Intentionally touching the ball with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player (e.g., dropping the ball, dribbling it and then picking it back up is not allowed -- however, if he accidentally dropped it, it might be okay to pick it back up, the decision would be up to the Referee). Read b.2 and b.3 above. If the Goalkeeper "possesses" the ball and "releases" it, then he can only handle it again after an opponent touches it, or if it is accidentally kicked back or headed or chested back by a teammate. He can't pick it up if a teammate has intentionally kicked or thrown it to him. Notice that this rule only applies if he actually has "possession" of the ball, and not, for example, if he blocks touches a shot with his hands and then picks up the ball to "control" it. So, the important words here are "possession" and "released" -- under this rule just touching the ball isn't the same thing as having "possession" of the ball. However, in terms of protecting the Goalkeeper's safety, some referees will consider the Goalkeeper to have the ball under his control if he even has one finger on it -- this is to discourage attackers from trying to kick the ball out of the Keeper's hands.

Advantage Clause. This rule states that the Referee, in his discretion, may decide to not stop play due to a foul if it would be to the advantage to the fouled team to not stop play (i.e., The concept is that the team that was fouled should not be punished by having an attack stopped which might result in a goal and, conversely, that the team which committed the foul should not gain an advantage as a result of the foul)